

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ACCRA 05701 150753Z
ACTION AF-10

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C O N F I D E N T I A L ACCRA 5701

LONDON FOR SEITZ

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV, GH
SUBJ: COMMENT ON FIRST CABINET CHANGES BY NEW REGIME

REF: ACCRA 5614 (NOTAL)

1. DR. APPIAH'S REMOVAL AS COMMISSIONER FOR FINANCE
COMES AS SHOCK TO FOREIGN OBSERVERS. HE WAS WELL
AND FAVORABLY KNOWN IN INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL
CIRCLES AND HIS PRESENCE WILL BE MISSED. PARTICULARLY
AT A TIME WHEN NEW REGIME IS STRESSING COMPETENCE
IN GOVERNMENT OFFICES AND UNDERTAKING THOROUGHGOING
ECONOMIC REFORMS, HIS REPLACEMENT BY A RELATIVELY
UNKNOWN ARMY OFFICER SEEMS ILL-ADVISED ACCORDING
TO A SOURCE CLOSE TO THE CASTLE, SUPRISE ACTION
STEMMED FROM AN SMC DECISION TO DOWNGRADE FINANCE
PORTFOLIO AND UPGRADE THAT OF GOVERNOR OF BANK OF
GHANA. HENCEFORTH LATTER WILL BE KEY FINANCIAL
POLICY MAKER AND WILL SET BUDGETARY LIMITS.
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PAGE 02 ACCRA 05701 150753Z

COMMISSIONER FOR FINANCE WILL BE A TECHNICIAN,
CHARGED WITH KEEPING TRACK OF EXPENDITURES AND
MAKING CERTAIN GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS DO NOT
OVERSPEND AS IS NOW THEIR CUSTOM. ACCORDING TO
SOURCE, APPIAH PROVED TOO WEAK IN RESISTING OUTSIDE
PRESSURES; NEW APPOINTEE, COLONEL OKLAH, IS
EXPECTED TO BE TOUGH AND USE HIS RANK TO TURN OFF

UNMERITED REQUESTS. HE IS , BESIDES, A CAPABLE
STATISTICIAN WHO HAS DONE A GOOD JOB AS DIRECTOR
OF NATIONAL LOTTERIES. (DESPITE THIS EXPLANATION,
EMBASSY BELIEVES THAT REMOVAL OF DR. APPIAH WAS A
BAD PUBLIC RELATIONS MOVE WHICH WILL DO NOTHING
TO HELP THE NEW REGIME'S IMAGE.)

2. REMOVAL OF FORMER COMMISSIONER FOR TRANSPORT
AND COMMUNICATIONS DWEMOH, WHO WAS GIVEN THE
RELATIVE NON-JOB OF COMMISSIONER FOR SPORTS, LIKE-
WISE SEEMS UNWISE. HE WAS ONE OF THE ABLE
COMMISSIONERS, WHO IN THE EMBASSY'S VIEW TRIED
HARD TO DO A DECENT JOB AGAINST TREMENDOUS ODDS.
NEVERTHELESS HIS OUTSPOKEN PUBLIC CRITICISMS
SUCH AS THOSE RECENTLY DIRECTED AGAINST INEFFICIENT
AND CORRUPT GHANA AIRWAYS EMPLOYEES AND CUSTOMS
OFFICIALS, EVEN THOUGH MERITED, PROBABLY PROVED
HIS UNDOING. CASTLE SOURCE MENTIONED ABOVE TOLD
US SMC FOUND DWEMOH GOOD AT UNDERCOVERING PROBLEMS
BUT NOT SO EFFICIENT AT FINDING SOLUTIONS. HE
ADDED THAT NEW COMMISSIONER HARLEY WAS BEST
ADMINISTRATIVE TALENT SMC COULD FIND. HE IS
EXPECTED TO REORGANIZE HIS VITAL MINISTRY AND FIND

SOLUTIONS TO CRUCIAL TRANSPORT PROBLEMS NOW FACING
THE NATION.
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PAGE 03 ACCRA 05701 150753Z

3. AS FOR REOVAL OF BEECHAM AS SECRETARY TO SMC,
HE WAS WIDELY CONSIDERED INCOMPETENT. HIS
DEPARTURE WILL NOT BE MOURNED. HOLMES

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